

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00
PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 /056 W
-----051632 252011Z /41

R 251929Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO COMNAVACT ROTA SP
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4354
SECDEF WASHDC
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
CNO WASHDC
COMNAVSEASYS COMD WASHDC
CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
COMSIXTHFLT NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 04456

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, SP
SUBJECT: MARK 83 BOMB RECOVERY OPERATIONS AT ROTA

REF: (A) JUSMG-MAAG MADRID 151200Z DEC 77 NOTAL
(B) JUSMG-MAAG MADRID 161130Z DEC 77 NOTAL
(C) JUSMG-MAAG MADRID 171510Z APR 78 NOTAL
(D) COMNAVACT ROT 241420Z APR 78 NOTAL

1. ON APRIL 21, THE SPANISH NAVY ASSUMED RESPONSIBIIITY
FOR RECOVERY OF THREE MARK 83 BOMBS WHICH WERE LOST OFF
ROTA HARBOR DECEMBER 11 DURING A ROUTINE TRANSFER OF
AMMUNITION. (REF D.)

2. AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME, WE RECEIVED INFORMATION
THAT THE STORY OF THE BOMB LOSS AND UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH
MAY SOON BREAK, IN A DISTORTED FASHION, IN THE SPANISH
PRESS. WE HAVE DISCUSSED PUBLIC AFFAIRS HANDLING OF THE
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STORY WITH SENIOR SPANISH NAVY OFFICIALS IN MADRID, WHO
HAVE EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR HANDLING THE SPANISH PRESS
THEMSELVES.

3. THEREFORE, WE WILL, FOR NOW, REFER SPANISH PRESS
INQUIRIES TO SPANISH NAVY HEADQUARTERS IN MADRID, AND WE
SUGGEST THAT YOU DO LIKEWISE. WE WILL RESPOND TO ANY U.S.

PRESS INQUIRIES ALONG THE LINES OF THE FOLLOWING:

BEGIN TEXT:

ON DECEMBER 11, 1977, DURING A ROUTINE TRANSFER OF AMMUNITION BETWEEN TWO UNITS OF THE SIXTH FLEET ANCHORED IN THE BAY OF CADIZ, THREE PIECES OF UNARMED, UNFUSED CONVENTIONAL ORDNANCE WERE INADVERTENTLY DROPPED INTO THE BAY. THERE IS NO DANGER ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TYPE OF TRANSFER, NOR DOES THE ORDNANCE IN QUESTION REPRESENT ANY DANGER TO PERSONS OR PROPERTY, EVEN IF DISTURBED. IT CAN NOT EXPLODE. HOWEVER, SEARCH EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE, IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH SPANISH AUTHORITIES, IN THE INTEREST OF RECOVERING THIS MATERIAL, EVEN THOUGH IT REPRESENTS NO DANGER.

THE SHIPS INVOLVED IN THE TRANSFER WERE ANCHORED IN AN AUTHORIZED EXPLOSIVE HANDLING AREA OUTSIDE OF ALL SHIPPING LANES AND AWAY FROM ALL BAY TRAFFIC.

QUESTION: WHAT STEPS WERE TAKEN TO NOTIFY SPANISH AUTHORITIES?

ANSWER: THE SPANISH NAVAL STAFF WAS ADVISED THROUGH SPANISH NAVAL AUTHORITIES AT ROTA WHO HAD BEEN INFORMED BY U.S. NAVY PERSONNEL ON THE SCENE.

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QUESTION: WERE THESE NUCLEAR DEVICES?

ANSWER: NO. THESE ITEMS WERE CONVENTIONAL MUNITIONS.

QUESTION: WHAT THREAT TO SEA TRAFFIC EXISTS FROM THIS INCIDENT?

ANSWER: NONE. THE LOCATION OF THE LOSS IS IN AN AUTHORIZED AMMUNITION TRANSFER ZONE AWAY FROM ALL SEA TRAFFIC.

QUESTION: WILL YOU IDENTIFY THE U.S. NAVAL UNITS INVOLVED?

ANSWER: THE SUPPLY SHIP USS SEATTLE AND THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ.

QUESTION: IS IT NOT TRUE THAT USS NIMITZ IS A NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIP?

ANSWER: YES, THE NIMITZ IS A NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIP WHICH HAS BEEN IN SPANISH WATERS BEFORE.

QUESTION: WHAT WERE PREVIOUS NPW VISITS?

ANSWER: NIMITZ VISITED ROTA ON ONE PREVIOUS OCCASION JANUARY 24 THROUGH 27. (IF PURSUED, WAS IN COMPANY WITH USS SOUTH CAROLINA, A NUCLEAR-POWERED CRUISER.) (IF ASKED: IT IS NOW AGAIN AT ROTA.)

QUESTION: WHAT WAS THE MISSION OF THE NPW NIMITZ IN SPANISH WATERS?

ANSWER: NIMITZ WAS ON A SCHEDULED ROTATION BETWEEN U.S. EAST COAST AND U.S. SIXTH FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. ITS PRESENCE AT ROTA, IN THE BAY OF CADIZ, WAS CLEARED WITH AND APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE PRESENT STATUS OF RECOVERY OPERATIONS?

ANSWER: NOT YET SUCCESSFUL.

QUESTION: DOES THE NAVAL BASE AT ROTA STOCK NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00

PA-01 INRE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 /046 W

-----051644 252013Z /43

R 251929Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO COMNAVACT ROTA SP

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4355

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CNO WASHDC

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CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA

COMSIXTHFLT NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MADRID 04456

ANSWER: THE MATTER IS DEALT WITH IN THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. THE TREATY STATES: "THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT STORE NUCLEAR DEVICES OR THEIR COMPONENTS

ON SPANISH SOIL." WE HAVE NO FURTHER COMMENT.

QUESTION: ARE THERE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOARD NIMITZ?

ANSWER: IT IS U.S. POLICY NEITHER TO CONFIRM NOR DENY PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON VESSELS.

QUESTION: WERE THE BOMBS THAT WERE LOST CAPABLE OF BEING DETONATED THROUGH ANY ACCIDENT?

ANSWER: NO. THEY ARE UNFUSED.

QUESTION: ARE ANY OTHER NPW'S IN SPANISH WATERS OR ARE THERE ANY SCHEDULED?

ANSWER: THE CRUISER USS CALIFORNIA WAS IN ROTA FROM DECEMBER 11 THROUGH 14 WITH SPANISH GOVERNMENT APPROVAL. THE USS NIMITZ, USS CALIFORNIA, AND USS SOUTH CAROLINA ARE NOW AT ROTA (APRIL 18-MAY 2).

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QUESTION: ARE NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES BASED AT ROTA?

ANSWER: YES. THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION OF 1976 AUTHORIZES A SQUADRON TO BE BASED AT ROTA.

QUESTION: DO THESE SUBMARINES CONTAIN NUCLEAR ARMAMENT?

ANSWER: IT IS U.S. POLICY NEITHER TO CONFIRM NOR DENY PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

QUESTION: HAVE ANY OTHER NUCLEAR-POWERED VESSELS ENTERED ROTA BESIDES THOSE MENTIONED?

ANSWER: YES. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED ENTRY INTO THE PORT OF ROTA OF OTHER SHIPS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES SPELLED OUT IN THE AGREEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY. END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, BOMBS (ORDNANCE), RESCUE OPERATIONS, PRESS RELEASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID04456
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780177-0173
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780420/aaaaaqry.tel
Line Count: 207
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2860913
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARK 83 BOMB RECOVERY OPERATIONS AT ROTA
TAGS: MARR, SP, US
To: COMNAVACT ROTA SP
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/740b49a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014